

DRAFT MINUTES
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN
HOLLAND WAY-HAMPTON ROAD PUBLIC INPUT SESSION
MAY 18, 2016

Call to Order:

The session was called to order at 6:08 pm by Darren Winham, Economic Development Director.

Introduction by Darren Winham, Economic Development Director:

Staff present were Mr. Winham, Don Clement, Selectman, Langdon Plumer, Planning Board member, and David Pancoast, Recording Secretary. Members of the public were present as well.

Mr. Winham: this is the fifth in a six part series. We're going to look at Hampton Rd first, then Holland Way as some folks have to leave after their Hampton Road input.

Fact Sheet Review:

This area of town has 46 parcels. It's 226 acres, The value is \$61 million. If you take out the town owned recreation complex, it comes to \$293,500/ac value. The street length is 1.7 miles. There are no traffic lights, which is important, and no on street parking. Holland Way does not have municipal sewer and water and it is zoned Professional Technology Park (PT). Hampton Rd has moderate density commercial uses and it has a 68 unit residential portion that is being developed and it does have municipal water and sewer and it is zoned Neighborhood Professional (NP). There is a brook and wetlands at Holland Way, which might limit development. Mr. Plumer added that the Planning Board is doing a site walk of part of this area this week.

Attendees' Vision for the Corridor:

Hampton Rd area:

Mike Dolly, resident, gives the background of the area. It was looked at as both residential and business. It was looked at as a business zone back then. The residents got a change in zoning to NP and the R1 went to R2 (higher density). In the ensuing 25 years, zoning change has been very effective, have medical and similar infill. Also, on R2 zone we've had infill of residential. It has worked and this has been effective. Substantially built out now and it's worked well.

Mr. Winham agreed that it is working and is largely built out and is working, in this process we look at change and redevelopment and such. Not much has to change there. It hasn't got a lot of value for economic development.

A resident added that a proposal by Churchill's was taken up in the past and the zoning changed there to allow an accessory use. Mr. Dolly responded that he doesn't think the zoning changed, he thinks it was interpreted differently is all. There was discussion about that aspect and the processes involved. Mr. Clement adds that it doesn't show up as accessory use in the zoning designations.

[There was continued discussion on this aspect of the zoning and specifically in this area]. Mr. Winham said that if this happened, it could be done again.

Another resident commented that that zone is NP is "holding the line" there. We need to touch on traffic in this entire area. The intersection at Guinea and Hampton Rd, has led to lots of traffic in the past. When you look at financial, multiple requirements were made to contribute to that intersection. When we are talking about increased development, traffic study was done. That ROW would give outgoing traffic in all directions, would get to Rtes. 101/95 rather than going through a residential zone, which is important. Each developer should be required to contribute to Holland Way improvements, so that all three corners are evaluated by an engineer. People get on shoulder at left turn and aren't waiting. Please don't ignore the traffic issues. The "rent-a-cop" at Churchill's is ineffective on weekends. We need more traffic evaluation. We want to hold the line for residential and not get into spot zoning or exception.

Another resident confirmed and added that there has been change since she moved into Exeter Farms 18 years ago. A lot of commercial came in there. It's a gateway for Exeter.

Mr. Winham said that he stopped the EDSP map line there as he had no intention of looking at more development out there nor putting the area into the development/redevelopment aspect. This input has been fantastic on this. Mr. Winham then went over the development map handout. In terms of the area sold to Mr. Gargula, it was done with the DOT working with Exeter Public Works to be sure that intersection was not inhibited in any way. Mr. Clement confirmed that DPW was very involved there with that intersection. There was discussion of that past process. Mr. Clement added that there was an intention to retain a lot of street width there for future expansion. The intersection of Holland Way and High St/ Hampton Rd was very important. There was a light proposed there, but it didn't go anywhere. When state land was made available at that intersection, the plan was for future expansion of it.

[Discussion on that area continued vis-à-vis donations of money and land for improvements.]

Another resident brought up the aspect that this is visioning for this area as to what it might be. As for increasing road widths and speeding up traffic, we might not want to do it there. It's counter-intuitive. Read "Walking Cities," which lays out best approaches to address these things.

Another resident stated that this neighborhood is a fine example of narrow streets keeping traffic slower.

A resident said if we look at Holland Way as becoming commercial, then things change, traffic patterns change. If people can get through Hampton Road faster, and can get to the highway that way faster, it's what they will do. That is not for the best.

Mr. Plumer added that he is not sure how far out this discussion goes or should go as the zoning is R2 there. Mr. Winham replied that he hadn't looked at that. Have to look at the future.

Holland Way area:

Mr. Winham then moved on to the component of the session related to Holland Way. He reported that Mr. Lou Gargula is here for input on this--he owns several major parcels out there. He had projects with the ZBA.

Potential Development Map Parcels-What Would be a Good Fit?:

This agenda item was specifically dealt with through discussion-see other sections herein.

Infrastructure Extension on Holland Way:

Mr. Winham said he has talked to developers and all want infrastructure in there before investing. What if a Tax Increment Financing ("TIF") program was done with 587 acres, it would make the properties more valuable--infrastructure could be installed to make it more attractive to developers. The town could do a TIF only for the properties that would benefit from the improved infrastructure. Developers pay for it up front, then the TIF pays town back.

A resident asked about an infrastructure connection all along Holland Way to Portsmouth Ave, what would those benefits be? Holland is not a dead end, it loops the town together. Mr. Winham said it has not been looked at in terms of costs. Mr. Clement said that the town can come up with a basic cost pretty quickly and also said there was a TIF done on Epping Rd, and everyone needs to understand that all that money doesn't go into the general fund, so it doesn't help the homeowners. Maybe the town should just pay for the connection on infrastructure.

The same resident opined that there are other ways to raise funds.

Another resident said she thought that the Epping Rd TIF matter first came up too suddenly, just a month before the vote. This could be done with proper planning, but it's like a year-long project. Perhaps it would benefit from some combining of lots there, or expansions of some developed areas like Riverwoods. Exeter needs to know "who it is" in all this. Economic viability and cohesive workable plans are all needed in the Master Plan ("MP") as well. Mr. Winham

agreed and said this meeting is about visioning and what we want to do in that area. A resident added that it's best to put assisted living facilities as near as possible to the services they need.

Potential Zoning and/or Permitted Use Changes in Corridor:

Mr. Winham stated that the town won't be looking at Hampton Rd portion for zoning changes, due to the feedback at this session.

Osram Sylvania owns 21 acres, in current use, and is valued at \$191,000, but it is wet there. And that wetlands is not like some low value wetlands, some of that is high value wetlands. Parcels 3A and 3B, are owned by Mr. Steinberg, collectively about 21 acres, with 5 being developable and are being marketed for \$700,000. There is a concept plan for a portion of Parcel 4 which is 20 acres, 5 being developable. Parcel 3B did go to Planning Board for a project and got approved. But it never happened due to company finances. There is also another site of 33 acres, owned by Mr. Blanchard. Mr. Clement revealed that that site is in a trust as Mr. Blanchard, the owner, has passed.

Mr. Winham continued that it's about 11 acres developable but there is no access to it, so someone needs to purchase access over abutting private parcels. There are some properties with that part of it being along the reservoir, so it is challenging. Mr. Gargula has several parcels some on the market for years, but in strategic locations. So, what do we do there? Are there things that folks want to see allowed that zoning currently doesn't allow for under PP? What about restaurant, retail, light manufacturing?

Mr. Winham stated that Mr. Gargula can talk about that. David Choate of Collier spoke about a glut of office space in the seacoast area. Other uses could be considered for this or it might go undeveloped for a long period of time. Infrastructure is an important aspect.

Mr. Clement added that on the east side of Holland Way, where it's already developed as professional office space/technology park, so naturally Holland Way was all zoned the same way. I read something different in the Portsmouth 'Herald' that there's a shortage of office space in seacoast area.

Mr. Lou Gargula spoke, reporting that the office space market is currently very soft. It's virtually non-existent-people are working from home and sharing offices where any is needed. It was marketed for 7-8 years with no interest. Tucker and Ciandella were interested but we couldn't work it out fast enough. Steinberg's other properties need $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of sewer for hundreds of thousands of dollars in costs. My property has some minor wetlands and a possible vernal pool. The reality is that no one wants it. I have 9-10 acres of land that I can't do anything with, but it won't be offices unless we find someone who wants it as such. My building is subdivided into separate offices and it works well. If hospital expands, we'd be happy to work with them on it.

Residents don't want businesses in there, so if it's not offices, I don't know what's going to happen there. Might be sensible to consider putting some residential projects in that area.

A resident asked him about the 96 units coming in and more units nearby so when will it be too much? Mr. Gargula says there is a need, there are a few vacancies. In Newmarket in residential buildings, we've had no vacancies in years. A resident responded as a realtor, she said houses are hard to come by for buyers. But the 96 units opening in the summer and it will be interesting to see what happens. She spoke about another residential project at 'Shinberg.' Mr. Gargula added that it's more expensive there.

Mr. Clement added that that's why there's a master plan process. Maybe residents won't want to see apartment and condo complexes and multifamily residential. I want to see what residents want Exeter to look like.

Mike Dolly said that at another town meeting last night, timing was a big issue. Just starting Master Plan. Let's slow down, digest it and do it the right way. Maybe changes are coming, but the town should finish MP and EDSP first.

Another resident said people come to town for what it is now. People might want to come to this town for business development, but most people come for residential.

Mr. Winham revealed that the last MP was done in 2002, very long ago now. Doing the plan updates is important because there is a housing market. Use changes are not just residential—it's a hot topic. Mr. Gargula's sites may make sense as becoming something else. What Don Clement noted is important, to look at area and decide this is going to be this or that. That is true particularly with technology. It isn't the same anymore—it's not coming out of the woodwork now. What other commercial uses could go in there?

Mr. Gargula said that the town should consider nursing homes, or adult daycare. Holland Way is off beaten track/small highway. Good for such uses.

Mr. Dolly added that one of the consultants says town is lacking data. Planner is changing that very quickly, which is good. Another resident spoke of schools/class sizes and such. Mr. Plumer added that the town needs young families to grow. Mr. Gargula added that the town needs not just children but also 55 and older housing and aspect of the community.

Another resident stated that the town needs small affordable houses for younger people too, not just 55 and over. Mr. Clement said the law can't prevent developers from doing 55 and over development. Over the next 30 years, there will be a much greater increase in the elderly and we have to deal with it, we can't put our heads in sand. He then said that with regard to the technology park zoning, we need to go thorough ZORK and MP and expand the uses of the technology park. Why not add healthcare and such? May need to look at that, adding more

permitted uses. About 25-30 years ago, everyone wanted high tech businesses everywhere, but that might not make sense here anymore.

Another resident said the town should try to get landowners to work together to do projects with less limits. Group their parcels together to make something work with a larger campus scenario. Mr. Winham said that three parcels are all for sale but if someone can get them all, it would be a vast amount of property.

A resident said retail shouldn't go in there—too much traffic and brings more retail in there. A resident said if there is a restaurant or two, there's high enough density, then not so bad. A resident said medical offices there are looking for a place to eat, lots of offices without lunch places.

Other Items:

A resident said that the town is walkable but no shoulders out there along Hampton Rd. Can't bike or walk there. Need changes there to accommodate walkers and bikers. The narrowing of roads to slow traffic down doesn't allow for sidewalk and bikers. Simple line painting can affect traffic. It was added by another that putting trees in is a barrier and makes people feel safe.

The resident continued that at the Parks and Rec Center there are road crossing safety issues. Mr. Winham added that if there is an expansion of rec fields there, that traffic will increase.

There was some discussion of Exeter Woods, the Rec center being overtaxed in use, bike path safety and issues at Carriage Rd, a bike lane on Holland Way and bike paths and money over time and the budget for it.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, Mr. Winham adjourned the session at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by David Pancoast, Recording Secretary